

A producer of custom limestone

The owner of Continental Cut Stone in Florence, TX, continually strives to expand his custom stonework shop and quarry operations

by Jennifer Adams



Rob Teel, owner of Continental Cut Stone — a custom limestone fabrication business — recently launched Continental Cream Quarries, LLC. “As of January 5, we have reopened an existing quarry to provide Texas (Cordova) Cream and Texas (Cordova) Shellstone limestone,” he said. “We will be supplying blocks and slabs to cut stone fabricators around the country.”

Based in Florence, TX, Continental Cut Stone sits in the countryside of Texas about an hour outside of Austin. The company, which was started by owner Rob Teel in 1987, specializes in limestone construction and restoration. Diverse in both

high-end residential and commercial projects, the company primarily works with architects, builders and contractors.

According to Teel, the business was initiated when he purchased an existing milling facility that was in foreclosure

from a local savings and loan, and the IRS was paid to release its liens on the property. “Initially, with five employees and myself, we began custom cut stone operations,” said Teel. “The original employees, including our chief drafter, Homer Robertson, all had industry



The new quarry is located in central Texas, and is a source that has been available elsewhere for 100 years, according to Teel.



Last year, Continental Cut Stone's facility in Florence, TX, underwent a renovation, which expanded the mill to approximately 14,000 square feet. Among the machinery in the mill are four planers.

experience, making the start-up company able to produce immediately. That group, along with others added as time went by, made this company go from day one. With a slow steady annual growth, we have grown our workforce to over 60 employees, currently."

The quarries

In addition to the custom cut stone operation, Teel has also invested in several quarries. Continental Quarries, Inc. began extracting Lueders limestone in 2000. The site is situated near the Abilene area of Texas, and all of its

stone is processed at Continental Cut Stone's mill in Florence.

"We have our operation on 160 acres and purchased an additional 160 acres last year for future use," said Teel. "Last year's production at the quarry exceeded 30,000 tons of



The fabrication process begins with blocks being cut by a 15-foot diamond belt saw.



A 72-inch FB72-11 fixed bridge saw from Park Industries of St. Cloud, MN, is also in place to cut limestone pieces.



Continental Cut Stone's recent expansion involved the purchase and installation of a second Jaguar saw, also from Park Industries.

material in block, split-face, slabs and roughback veneer."

"We work in six different types of limestone — five are from Texas," said Tom Estes, General Manager of Continental Cut Stone. "The roughback Lueders is probably the most popular in the country right now. We get calls for it every day. We used to throw it all away. Another company decided to try to market it, and it has taken off like wildfire. Architects love it."

Most recently, Teel launched a new venture, Continental Cream Quarries, LLC. "As of January 5, we have reopened an existing quarry to provide Texas (Cordova) Cream and Texas (Cordova) Shellstone limestone," he said. "We will be supplying blocks and slabs to cut stone fabricators around the country. This quarry is located in Central Texas, and is a source that has been available elsewhere for 100 years. We are excited to bring our experience and service attitude to this arena."

According to Teel, operation at Continental Cream Quarries will begin with a 7-yard rubber tire loader with a fork attachment, a W.F. Meyers quarry saw from W.F. Meyers Co. Inc. of Bedford, IN, and four experienced employees. "Blocks and slabs are now available for shipment," said the owner.

At Continental Quarries' Lueders limestone site, three 7-yard rubber tire loaders, a 4-yard rubber tire loader and a large track excavator are used to extract material. Additional equipment includes: 64-inch-diameter and 72-inch-diameter circular saws from Sawing Systems Inc. of Knoxville, TX, a 48-inch-diameter multi-blade (up to four blades) conveyer saw,



The planers are instrumental in smoothing limestone slabs and ensuring that they are all consistent in size.



At the time of *Stone World's* visit, there were 25 jobs going on in-house.



Three stone lathes are used for turning columns and balusters.

three hydraulic splitting machines, a 24-inch-diameter joint saw, two skid steers, two forklifts and an 80-foot truck scale.

In addition to limestone produced from its own quarries, Continental Cut Stone also offers several other varieties

to its customers, including Hadrian and Indiana limestone.

The limestone color varieties offered by Continental Cut stone range from white to beige to pink, yellow and gray. Patterns vary from monotone to highly variegated, striped or speckled.

The mill

Last year, Continental Cut Stone's facility in Florence, TX, underwent a renovation, which expanded the mill to approximately 14,000 square feet. The staff at this location works together as a team to guarantee high-quality prod-



At the mill, skilled workers use hand tools to carve detailed limestone pieces.

ucts and first-rate customer service.

Projects begin in the company's estimating department, where customers are given a price and timeframe estimate. Once the customer accepts the proposal, the drafting department, which consists of three draftspeople, develops shop drawings, according to Estes. "From the shop drawings, we produce a custom ticket, which is sent to our production facility," he said.

The General Manager went on to explain that the process in the fabrication facility begins with blocks being cut by a 15-foot diamond belt saw. The mill also houses four planers that are



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The company purchases its hand tools and accessories from suppliers such as Bicknell, Trow and Holden and Bybee Stone.



Shop workers take care in making sure high standards are maintained through every step of the fabrication process.

instrumental in smoothing limestone slabs and ensuring that they are all consistent in size.

Additional machinery used in the custom stone-cutting process include: three stone lathes for turning columns and balusters, a Standish steel 14-foot narrow belt saw, two Jaguar saws from Park Industries of St. Cloud, MN — one of which was recently purchased and installed — a German band saw with an 18-inch throat, a Terzago-Tofren slab finishing machine, which was also recently purchased and installed, a 72-inch FB72-11 fixed bridge saw from Park Industries, four overhead cranes and a horizontal boring machine to core columns.



The majority of Continental Cut Stone's work is the upper high-end custom market.

“Our niche is the upper high-end custom market,” said Estes. “Our customers tend to be contractors and masonry contractors. There are also a few architects that we work with directly.”

At the mill, skilled workers use hand tools to carve detailed limestone pieces. The hand tools and accessories are supplied by companies such as Bicknell, Trow and Holden and Bybee Stone.

Although the majority of Continental Cut Stone's work is for the residential market, the company also does some commercial projects. At the time of *Stone World's* visit, the company was fabricating pieces for the Air Force Museum in Amarillo, TX, which has since been completed. This project was just one of about 25 that were in progress at the time. □

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